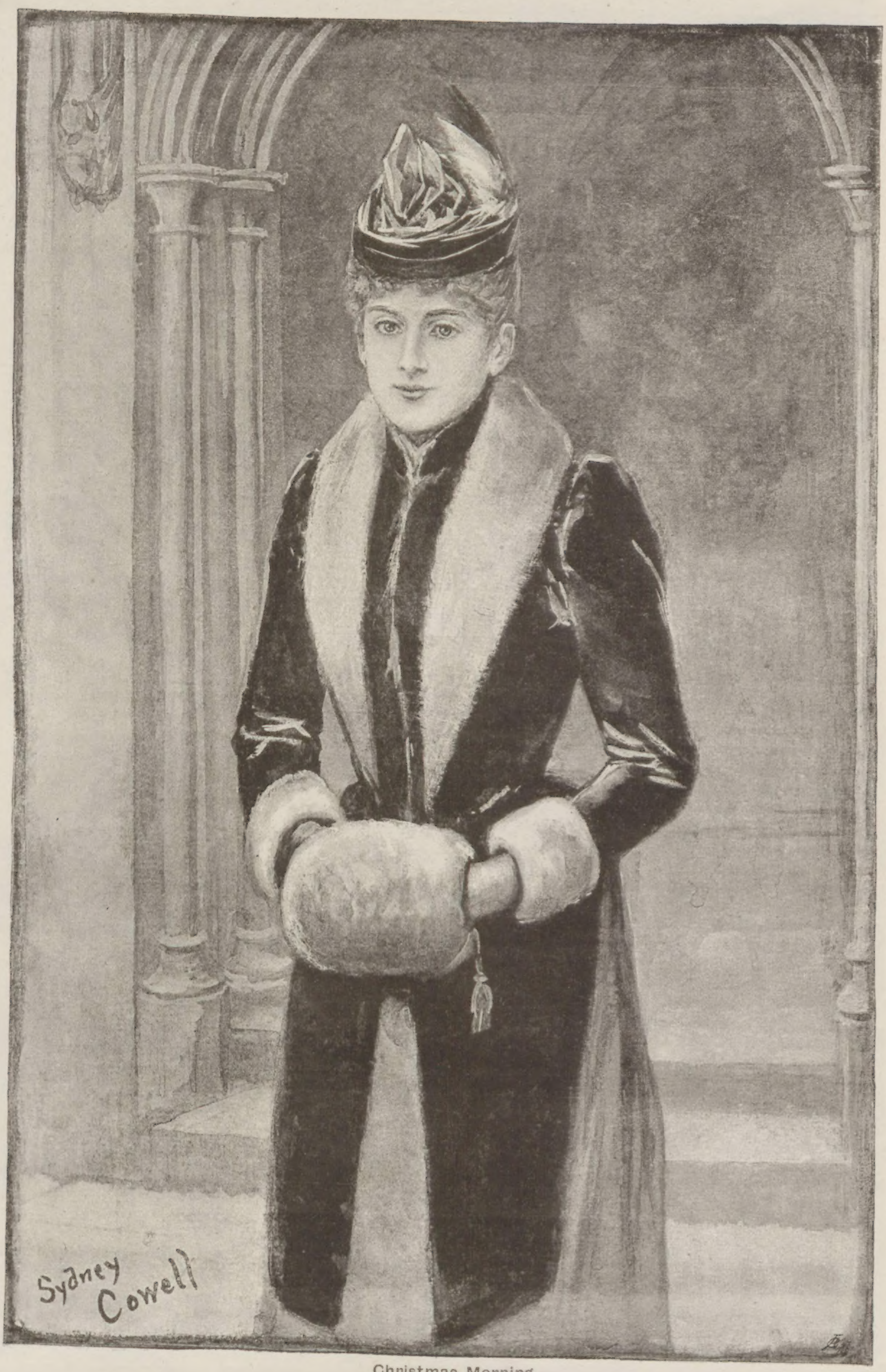
P.P.

P.P. 5992. gdb

THE MOTHERS' COMPANION.

5992
gdb

LONDON: S. W. PARTRIDGE & Co



Christmas Morning.

THE MOTHERS' COMPANION

VOL. V

London
S. W. PARTRIDGE & CO.
9 PATERNOSTER ROW
1891

BRITISH MUSEUM

The Volumes of the MOTHERS' COMPANION for 1889 and 1890 may still be had through any bookseller. In boards, coloured wrapper, 1s. 6d.; cloth, plain, 2s.; cloth, gilt edges, 2s. 6d. each.

THE MOTHERS' COMPANION.

"I forbid you to utter that man's name." p. 8.

MARTIN REDFERN'S OATH.

BY ETHEL F. HEDDLE,

Author of "Marjorie Gordon; Heroine or Fanatic?" "Fifeshire Tales," "Cobweb's Promise," etc.

CHAPTER I.

MARTIN REDFERN'S DAUGHTER.

"THE presumption of the poorer classes now-a-days is perfectly preposterous, but I allow nothing of the kind here, Mark; I put down my foot at once!"

"What do you expect? It is the spread of Radical and Socialistic ideas—they spread like an epidemic; I only wish the epidemic killed off a few of its patients;" and Mark Redfern turned towards the window with his usual complacent smile, and the sense of having said something rather clever.

His brother, however, did not appreciate the wit, if wit there was; he only growled anew, and then Mark Redfern inquired carelessly, "What has put you out?"

"Another letter from Tomlinson about that right of way."

"Ah! I would not fight the question. It strikes me the people have right on their side; and, though it is exceedingly annoying, still you will only lose money."

"I shall certainly fight the question. I don't know what you mean by 'right on their side.' Am I to have every butcher and baker in the town walking through my woods at will?"

Mark Redfern did not respond; he did not think it worth while evidently to argue the question. So he only went back to his *Times*, while his brother tapped the table impatiently with a paper-knife.

Martin was a little, thin old man, with fine features, rather prominent eyes, and a hooked nose. His usual expression was one of extreme obstinacy, mixed with pride. Mark Redfern was distinctly handsome, though his face was scarcely a pleasant one, and he was tall and strongly built.

Presently the old gentleman resumed—"Is Mark here today?"

"Yes; I believe he is with Ella in the garden. How does that progress?"

"Well; at least, I presume so. Ella knows my wishes. I don't know why Mark waits; they might be married before Christmas."

"Ahem! I fancy it is not Mark's fault. He tells me that he makes no way. Ella will not listen."

"She shall listen if I tell her to do so."

"Mark tells me that artist is still here."

"What has that got to do with the subject? He came and got my answer. That is another piece of presumption. The fellow had only a few hundreds a year besides what he makes by his brush, and he has the intolerable impertinence to come and ask for my daughter!"

"Was his father old Hilary of Dene?"

"I suppose so. Of course he is a gentleman; but the Hilarys are all alike, a careless, improvident set. They had to sell the place ages ago; and served them right. But the man's

being here does not matter at all. Ella is to marry Mark. I told her so. The two estates will be joined, and her children will inherit the Hall. Mark will be a rich man; he should go into Parliament."

"It sounds very well, Martin, but 'the best laid schemes gang aft agley,' as the Scotch fellow remarks. I wish I were as sure as you are of the young lady's obedience."

The manner more than the words annoyed Mr. Redfern, and he turned round impatiently, "I hate insinuations, Mark. What do you mean?"

"That I fancy Ella, with all her gentleness, will prove obstinate. She does not like Mark."

"Not like him! May I ask why not?"

"Who can say?"

"I can say that she must learn to like him," Mr. Redfern said, sharply; "and if she can't, then she must marry him without. I daresay the liking will come after marriage—it does in a good many cases. But one thing is sure, this dallying must come to an end; of that I am determined. I shall speak to her to-night. I half fancy a winter at Cannes, and Mark can marry her before I leave. She can spend the month in buying clothes."

He went over to his desk then, as if the matter were satisfactorily concluded, and his brother resumed his interrupted reading with a half smile. He had his own ideas on the subject, though it was not at present politic to express them.

The Hall was strictly entailed, and though Ella refused to marry her cousin, it would one day be Mark Redfern's all the same. As to the large fortune which would still be in the old gentleman's gift, that would certainly not be left to a disobedient daughter.

The girl was foolish, her uncle thought; but it really did not matter much whether she married Mark or not. They would play their cards so that the money should be theirs whatever happened. "Whichever way the winds of heaven blew, they should fill their sails;" of that he was determined. So he could watch events with the cool equanimity of one who is master of the situation.

Mr. Redfern meanwhile wrote a letter to his solicitor, his face adorned by a fierce frown, and there was silence in the study.

It was much more pleasant in the Hall garden now, where, after a sultry day, the evening air was delicious, and the scent of flowers seemed like the lingering cadence of a song. Ella Redfern was walking down the gravel path, a basket slung over her arm as she gathered a few choice buds, and by her side was Mark Redfern, junior.

One might have fancied them lovers—his attitude, as he bent his tall head, would have carried out the idea; but Ella did not look at him, and her fingers were slightly trembling as she arranged the flowers. He was speaking in very persuasive tones—

"You know it's all nonsense about not loving me. You have that pretty little head so full of poetry and romance that you cannot look at the common-sense side of life. Love is all very well in poetry and novels, and on the stage, but it is by no means necessary to existence, or even to happiness. You and I like each other very well—that is all that is necessary; and by obeying me you keep the Hall and obey your father. You must obey your father, Ella, unless you want to be cut off with the proverbial shilling. And that useful coin of the realm is scarcely desirable as the fortune of a young lady." She made no answer at all, and he went on in a half bantering tone. "I know you think me dreadfully common-place and unromantic, but I should make you a very good husband, and, after all, that is the chief thing. The Hero and Leander story sounds very nice, but you see the poor young man got his death by his rashness; and as for Romeo and Juliet, if they had lived a little longer who knows but that they would have quarrelled like cat and dog? I am certain Juliet would have turned out jealous!"

"I wish you would not talk so, Mark. You are jesting—mocking me. I cannot jest. You make it very hard for me. I do not love you, and I cannot marry you. Will you not go to my father and yours and tell them so? Surely it is not manly to persist in urging your suit?"

"But, my dear little cousin, I tell you that I am content without love."

"And I am not. I am so weary of telling you so, Mark. And, as I have told you before, there is someone else. You force me to say so."

"I know," he said, easily. "But you cannot marry him, Ella, so why not make me happy?"

"It would make you happy to gain a girl who has told you that she loves another man?"

"Who fancies she does, but in whom I have infinite confidence. Once my wife, you would forget all that."

His coolness made poor Ella feel as if she were beating her head against a rock. She grew very pale as she turned round at last to make a final appeal.

"Mark, will you not help me? Will you not give up this matter? Tell them what I say. You know my father, how angry he will be if you do not come to my aid. Say you see the marriage is impossible. Help me, Mark. I will thank you all my life."

Her cousin was brushing a speck from his otherwise immaculate coat; the smile with which he replied to her words was answer enough.

"I must decline to grant your request, Ella. I shall never give up hope of making you mine—till you marry someone else. I was always educated in the belief that you were to be my wife, and I cannot give up the idea. Try and look at the thing from my point of view. Men are so much more practical than women."

"Some men," she said, almost bitterly, stung out of her usual gentleness. "And I do not wish to look at things from your point of view. I should not wish the man I love to talk as you do. I have given you my answer once and for ever. If love is nothing to you it is everything to me, and I will not be false to it."

And then she turned away, her eyes bright, her face flushed, and left him standing there alone. He was utterly unmoved, only thinking, half carelessly, that the girl had more spirit than he gave her credit for.

How long would she hold out? And what a stupid little creature she was to dislike him. It was rather amusing to find himself disliked; but the next moment he felt really angry, for he was intensely vain, and in his intercourse with women had hitherto always had his advances met, at all events, half-way.

He switched off the heads from some lilies half savagely as he thought of it, and then turning, walked towards the long line of greenhouses, where he examined the heating apparatus, and came to the conclusion that there was a terrible waste of fuel; and of this he informed the head-gardener. Once the Hall was his, that was one of the many things he would alter.

Meantime Ella had entered the house, feeling troubled and very perplexed. Life altogether was a puzzle just then, and in whichever way she looked there seemed no escape.

Her father was determined upon this marriage, and she knew his strength of will; knew also the storms of fury

which overwhelmed those who dared to withstand that will. Hitherto she had never done so. He was very fond of her in his way; gave her an ample allowance, and always seemed pleased to have her beside him. But there was none of that sweet confidence or sympathy between them which might have been expected between a father and his only child.

She had never dared to question his will or venture to disagree with his commands, until the love story alluded to, and even then Mr. Redfern thought she had given in, and would obey him in the long run.

She had met Robert Hilary at the Vicarage, had seen a great deal of him during a long summer when her father was absent in Norway, and they had plighted their troth together when the summer ended, with unconscious happiness and ignorance of coming trouble. Ella did not dream that her father would go against her in this. He had only spoken of Mark Redfern in a half-joking tone—and her lover was so good, so attractive, so clever! He would plead his suit successfully, and she would be unutterably happy.

And then Mr. Redfern returned, the artist went to the Hall, and was met by a decided and almost insulting refusal.

To Ella her father did not say much, except that Hilary was a presumptuous fool, and then he told her that in May her cousin, Mark Redfern, was coming with his father to spend the vacation with them—that he was coming with the hope of gaining her as his wife, and that she was to accept him. He spoke as if refusal were impossible. When Ella did refuse, pleading with tears that she loved Robert and would never love or marry another, he only told her coldly to go away and not talk nonsense.

Then Mark came, and she began to feel like a bird caught in a net. They all seemed to take it for granted that she would give in. Her uncle and his son were suave but persistent, and when she spoke to her father he refused utterly to listen. And so the summer went on, Robert being still in the village, where he painted busily, and saw Ella in church beside Mark, the grey-blue eyes, which were the beauty of her pale face, very sad and hopeless; and he waited and watched events, being forbidden to write to her.

Ella was passing the study door now, when her father suddenly opened it, and when he saw her said in his usual brusque manner, "Come in."

Her uncle had evidently just left the room, for his paper and spectacles lay on the table. Ella put her basket of roses down and then looked up, nerving herself for what was to come. She had taken her heart in her hand when she went in. Instinctively she knew this would be battle royal.

The old man began without any preamble.

"When do you intend to marry Mark?"

"Father, I have told you—I cannot!"

"And may I ask why?"

"I do not love him. I sometimes think I do not even like him; and I am very sure he has no love for me—indeed, he does not even pretend to have any!"

"Love! love! you talk like a bread-and-butter schoolgirl! I have no patience with such nonsense. I don't ask you to love, as you call it. I tell you to marry your cousin, that is all! He is an honourable gentleman, your equal in fortune, and by marrying him you keep the Hall, and are the means of joining the two estates. This marriage has been the dream of my life. I like Mark, and I wish your child and his to inherit the Hall—I wish you to inherit it after me. I have made up my mind to this. That is all, Ella, but you must obey me. You must marry him before Christmas."

What was she to say? She had gone over the ground so often, her words were only reiteration—that she did not like Mark, that she loved Robert Hilary with all her heart, that her troth was his; and these words had always fallen on her father's ear as idle talk.

As she stood silent, very pale, and with downcast head, he thought she was giving in, and said more quietly and with complacency, "You will be the wife of one of the richest men in the county, and a leader in society. I wish you to be so, and Mark can go into Parliament. Come, look up, and tell me how much I am to give you for the trousseau!"

"Dear father, will you not listen to me? Indeed I cannot give in, I cannot obey you; it is not right, I cannot believe it, to make a loveless marriage, while my heart is Robert Hilary's! I cannot marry Mark—I never will! You *must* believe me!"

The tears had filled her eyes, but Mr. Redfern, starting fiercely at the last words, said harshly—

"I forbid you to utter that man's name."

She said nothing, and he resumed, his passion rising, "And I tell you, Ella, once and for all, that unless you give me your promise to marry Mark you leave this house. I recognise no child who dares to disobey me! You can think the matter over; your choice is plain—marry Mark or make up your mind to leave the Hall, and I shall forget that I have a daughter!"

"Father, have you no pity?"

"Not for a silly and disobedient girl. No more just now, Ella; you know my commands. I shall speak to both Mark and his father to-night, and I shall write to Lee about the settlements. I mean you to give in, and you shall! No, not another word!"

That was his usual way of stopping all discussion. Ella knew it of old. She had dried her eyes, and her face was pale and cold. She forgot to take her flowers as she went slowly away, and next morning she found them wilted and faded in the basket. As she mounted the staircase now, her cousin met her in the corridor, and he half smiled.

"Have you given in at last, *petite?* I heard your father's voice considerably upraised."

She looked at him coldly, almost scornfully. "I shall never give in, Mark. I am very unhappy, but I had rather be so than carry your heart within me! Are you not ashamed to have so lost all honour and self-respect as to join in persecuting me thus? I am helpless, but you are unmanly!"

And then she left him, with the echo of the scorn in her low voice haunting his recollection rather unpleasantly, in spite of his heartlessness. "So the little cat can scratch," he thought; "I hope she'll hold out, and that I shall have the Hall without the lady. At all events, the other fellow is still here—why don't they elope?"

* * * * * *

Evening service was over, and the congregation had left the church, but the organist was still playing, the exquisite and heart-soothing notes of "Oh, rest in the Lord" throbbing through the church. Ella and Robert Hilary were standing near the baptismal font, and he was talking in a low and hurried whisper.

"It is the only way, my darling; you must see it! The choice must come—your father and Mark Redfern, or the man you love, and who loves you. I will love you for ever! Ella, can't you trust me? I am poor, but I shall work, and one day I shall succeed! Everything comes, you know, to him who waits and works! I am young and strong, and at least I am not taking you to poverty."

"Robert, it is not that I fear, it is his anger. Will he ever forgive me? I am all he has, and in spite of all I love him! He was not always so harsh; Mark and his father have made him so. He is not like my father now. What will he say to me, Robert?"

"He will forgive you in time, when he sees how happy we are."

The pleading found an echo in Ella's heart only too strong. Oh! to end it all, the incessant intercourse with Mark Redfern, for she had thought of late she almost hated that cold face with its bland smile, and the ceaseless reiteration on her father's part that she must give in; to escape from it all with the man she loved, to know that they could never take her from his side and force her to marry Mark! In these weary days she had grown hopeless and almost despairing; she felt as if she were chained and bound.

Robert's pleasant and frank face, with its delicate complexion and open and truthful eyes, was bent above hers now; he took both her hands, and Ella left them in his, feeling swept away by his love and pleading.

At last she gave in, "Yes, I will come."

"Please God, you shall never repent these words," he said, and then, in the hush of the sacred building, he stooped and pressed his lips to hers, as if to seal the vow.

"*He shall give thee thy heart's desire*," the music echoed, as if in benediction, and the troubled aching of Ella's heart seemed soothed.

She had decided and chosen at last!

Could it be wrong to marry the man she loved, even against her father's wish? when on the other hand lay that dreadful alternative—Mark's cold hand and calculating heart, the insult of his smile over her heart-ache and despair?

Surely not!

Robert led her to the door where the carriage waited, whispering, "*Au revoir*, my darling, not good-bye." Her promise was given, the rubicon was passed, and even in the midst of her foreboding the thought was comfort, for it meant an end.

And once in her room, she fell on her knees, with her face uplifted to the starry sky. "God show me if I am wrong," she prayed; "God help me to do right, now and always. I want to do Thy will; but Thy will can never be to be false to love, and to swear a lie at Thy altar."

No, that could not be! Gradually, as she knelt there, peace filled her heart. "'Lead Thou me on,'" she whispered, "'one step enough for me.'" And God's light, the "kindly light" that will shine for all who humbly ask it, would show her the "one step." (*Continued on page* 17.)

A Maiden of Dinard.

Street in Dinan.

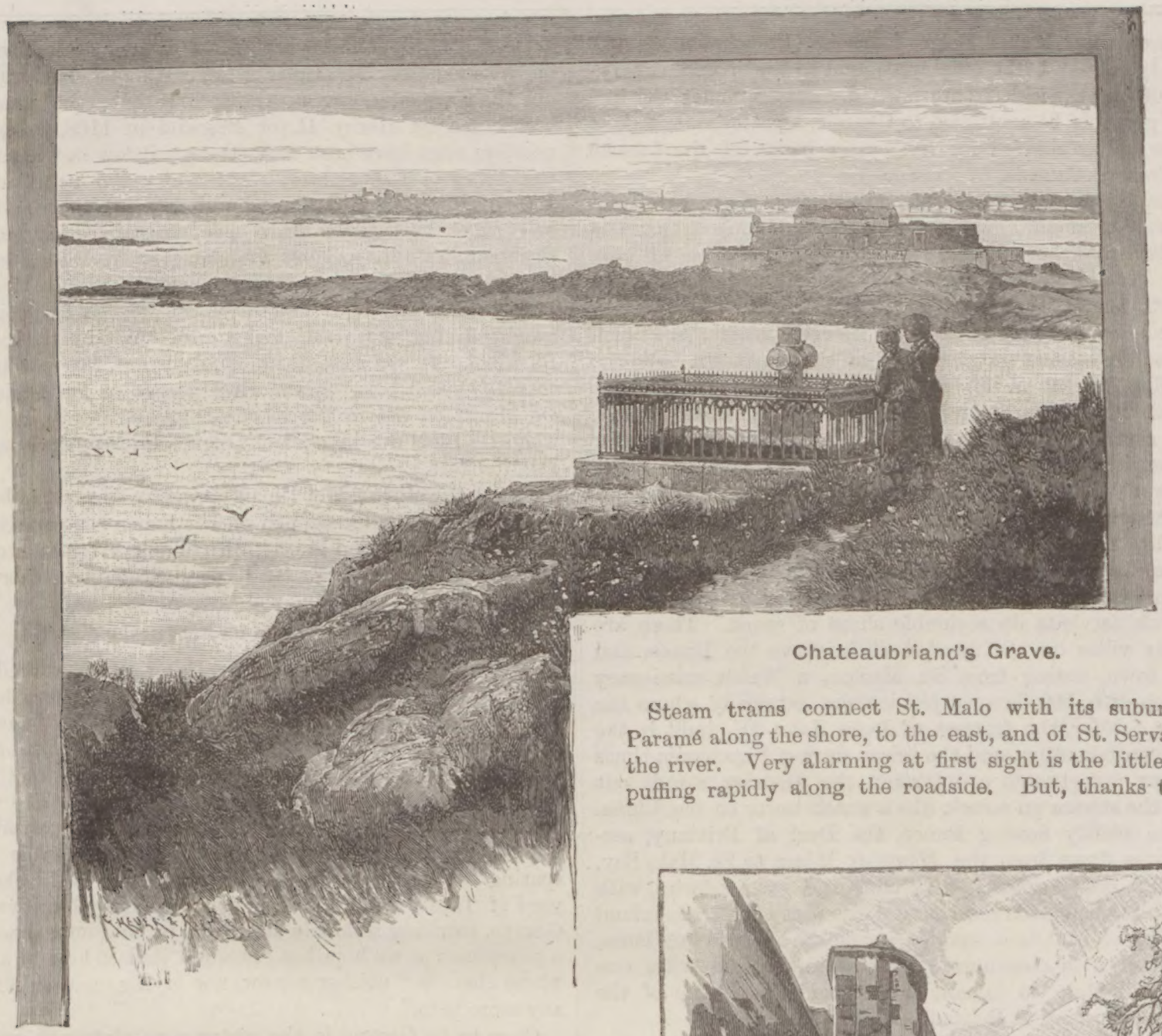
A HOLIDAY RUN IN BRITTANY.

BY EDITH E. CUTHELL.

By no other route to France do you get such a complete change as in crossing from Southampton to St. Malo. In the evening you leave the great estuary, with its flat wooded shores, and the bare downs of the Isle of Wight. By morning light you have arrived off an iron-bound coast of dark granite cliffs, fringed with rocky islands and reefs. The first impression of St. Malo, standing, wall-girt, on a rocky promontory, like Cadiz, is of a Riviera of the north. Landing there, at the cost of a little over a pound, the tourist finds himself in a most interesting country, and at a capital starting point for a week's holiday run, with material to satisfy every taste—artistic, antiquarian, cycling, yachting, or social.

As one passes from the quay, under the deeply-machicolated Grand Porte, up the dim, narrow High Street, with its sharp over-hanging gables and high *mansarde* roofs, to where the tall slender spire of the cathedral fills in the distance, the scene is equal to anything in Rouen. Through vast *portes cochères* one catches a glimpse of gloomy courtyards, whence wide stone staircases, like those of a Florentine *palazzo*, lead to the many flats above. As the narrow streets twist and turn, one comes, here and there, round a corner on quaint old market sheds, the timbers and shingles black with age. Twice a week they resound to the babel of white-capped market-women, each wearing the distinctive head-gear of her village, who ride in at early dawn astride between the wooden panniers of their donkeys, or among the pens of live poultry in the little carts drawn by jingling Norman cobs.

Thanks chiefly to the grey old fifteenth century castle



Chateaubriand's Grave.

Steam trams connect St. Malo with its suburbs of Paramé along the shore, to the east, and of St. Servan, up the river. Very alarming at first sight is the little train puffing rapidly along the roadside. But, thanks to the

and walls, built by the Duchess Anne, St. Malo has resisted successfully more than one English siege. But an equally good rampart to the town is the tide, falling here to a lower depth than anywhere else in the whole Channel, and leaving a perfect maze of reefs and rocks. No wonder the Malouins are good sailors. Jacques Cartier, the discoverer of Canada, was a native of St. Malo. So was the heroic Duguay Troin, who, in the last century, finding himself with a few of his countrymen prisoners on the English admiral's flagship, overpowered the crew, and sailed the frigate into St. Malo Bay.

In an old mansion overlooking the walls and the sea was born René de Chateaubriand. The Vicomte's family *hôtel* is now an inn, and, after a chequered career, the great traveller, the ambassador, the minister, lies in a nameless grave, shadowed by a cross on a lonely rock, accessible only at low tide.

A walk round the walls showed how impregnable this pirates' nest, "la ville des corsaires," was, during the Napoleonic wars, when its privateers preyed on the English mercantile navy. The bastions command lovely peeps of the crowded *plage* and the wide estuary of the Rance, with the cliffs and coves of Dinard and the wooded heights of St. Servan. The cathedral has been much restored, and Anne of Brittany's keep, with the haughty motto, "Qui qu'en grogne, ainsi sera, c'est mon plaisir," over one of the gates, is now a barrack, whence red-breeched soldiers descend on Sunday afternoons and discourse brazen music to the bourgeois crowds under the *café* awnings in the tree-planted *place* below.

The Gate of Mont St. Michel.

care of the "braves Belges" drivers (Frenchmen are not steady enough to be employed), and to the incessant blowing of horns, accidents are few. By next summer the line will probably be continued to Cancale, a pretty village eight miles off, celebrated for the oyster parks off the famous Rochers de Cancale.

Paramé is a typical French watering place, composed entirely of smart villas and tree-planted boulevards. The sands are splendid, and the bathing goes on all day long from little wooden *cabanes*, where a hot foot-bath awaits the returning bather. The bathing costumes of both sexes are very marvellous. Very domestic is French life at the seaside. Released from the tiny town flats, the families live out on the sands all day. Nurseries and nurses are unknown; the children eat and live with their parents, who care little for excursions and sight seeing, and are poor pedestrians. Croquet on the sands appears the only athletic pursuit. Paterfamilias is with his children all day.

Though the breezy, bracing shore of Paramé attracts a few English residents, St. Servan is the great British colony. Living in France as a residence, and not only during the season, is economical. House rents and wages are low, and French servants do a double share of work. There are pretty villas on the wooded cliffs above the Rance, and the town, dating from St. Maclou, a Welsh missionary bishop, A.D. 500, is very picturesque, especially where the *Tour Solidor*, the fortress of Duke John IV., built in the thirteenth century, and the prison during Napoleonic times of our unfortunate countrymen the *détenius*, stands out into the stream on a rock, like a watch-tower on the Rhine.

The swiftly flowing Rance, the Dart of Brittany, serpentines down from the *Monts de Ménez* to St. Malo Bay, through green *coteaux*, dark cliffs, and promontories, with here and there wide reaches, and glimpses of a fertile inland country of fruit-tree studded cornfields, and winding lanes, bordered with chestnuts. A two hours' steam takes one from St. Malo to Dinan, in the centre of some of the prettiest scenery in Brittany.

The ancient town stands on high overlooking the ravine. Very quaint is the walk from the quay up the precipitous Rue de Yerzual, which leads down under a double arched gothic gateway to the mediæval bridge spanning the ravine. The old houses in the narrow streets are wonderful. The upper stories are supported by carved wooden or granite pillars, or quaint corbels, forming a covered footway between the street and the dim little shops. The church of St. Sauveur is very old, with eleventh century work in the west front. The fourteenth century donjon, with its deep ditch, was defended by Duguesclin against the English in 1389. A recess in the chapel is called the "Fauteuil de la Reine Anne," whence the Maria Theresa of Brittany could hear mass unseen. But it is Duguesclin who is the hero of Dinan. It was in the *place*, now called by his name and adorned by his statue, that the great *duel à outrance* was fought between the noble Bertram and a treacherous English knight, Sir Thomas of Canterbery, who, Froissart tells us, violated a truce and captured the Constable's younger brother. Only seven years later is the date, 1359, on one of the oldest houses in the town, in the Rue de la Vieille Poissonerie, near the Carrefour de l'Horloge. Duguesclin was buried among the French kings at St. Denis. But his wife, the beautiful Typhaine la Fée, the magician, was laid in St. Sauveur, the brave Bertram's heart by her side. A black slab still marks the spot, but the ashes of both were scattered at the Revolution.

Dinan is a charming centre for excursions, and the well-wooded country round is a pleasant change after a sojourn on the seashore. The ruins of the castle of Lébon are without the town, standing on a steep hill above the river. It was taken by Henry II. of England in 1168, though its position must have been very strong. Below lie the ruins of the abbey of Lebon, now, alas! under the hands of too ardent restorers. The abbey church will look spick and span new in a short time. In a side chapel are buried the Beaumauoirs, with curious monuments. It was a Sieur de Beaumauoir who was the leader of the Bretons at the celebrated "Combat de Trente," of which we read in Froissart, fought during the great civil war in Brittany in 1351 at Ploërmel. It was a De Beaumauoir, again, who attempted to make peace between the rival parties of De Blois and De Montfort, before the bloody battle of Ouray, in 1364, when De Blois was killed and Duguesclin taken prisoner by De Montfort.

But on the other side of Dinan, approached by way of brooks and dells, where white-capped washerwomen beat ceaselessly, by winding lanes and grass-grown double avenues of chestnuts, lie ruins possessing a far deeper, more human interest—

> "The actions of the just
> Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

The ruined tower of La Garaye, rising white, carved and delicate in its woodland setting, is now all that is left of scenes of Christian devotion to others and of unselfish labours for the cause of sorrow and suffering, combined with a pathetic story, which has been enshrined in sweet verse by one of the most graceful of modern singers. The ruthless devastators of the Revolutionary time destroyed the noble work of Claude de la Garaye and his heroic wife, sparing not even their sepulchral monuments in the churchyard of Tardu. But a peace now seems to sleep over La Garaye, standing so lonely and silent in the summer woods, a peace such as we hope has rewarded its last lord in a land where there is "neither sorrow, nor crying, neither is there any more pain."

Close to La Garaye is the picturesque sixteenth century chateau of Coninais, with sun-dial on the grass-plat, and stone arches to the doorways leading to the white-panelled rooms, where hang the portraits of the good Comte and Comtesse de la Garaye.

From Dinan expeditions can be made to Corseuil, with its Roman remains; to a large *menhir* at St. Sanson; to various old ruined castles dotted about this part of the country; to Dol, with quaint thirteenth century houses in its broad street, and severe early-pointed cathedral, very like some of our English cathedrals of the same period. Then there is the mediæval castle of Combourg, the home of Chateaubriand, of which he wrote—

> "Combien j'ai douce souvenance
> Du joli lieu de ma naissance,"

still belonging to his family, and full of his relics. Beyond lies Vitré and Les Rochers, sacred to memories of the most charming female writer France ever produced, and where Madame de Sévigné's study is still left intact.

But the most interesting point from Dinan, the unique excursion of this part, or, indeed, of any other part of the world, is to the abbey-castle of Mont St. Michel, the Mount of Marvels. Sad it is, but true, that the *fin du siècle* spirit has destroyed much of the romance of the famous Mount. An excursion ticket takes you to Pontorson by train, and thence into a huge, five-horse *char-à-banc*, across the low-lying reclaimed country towards the bay. A causeway now, alas! makes the Mount accessible at all states of the tide.

There is no longer any delightful spice of danger in racing back over the wide expanse of sands against the incoming sea. But the weirdness of the approach is gone. Nothing, however, not even the hand of the restorer, now lavishly at work under the orders of the Minister who has charge of historical monuments, can mar the beauty of the abbey-fortress. One would go to see the monastery of St. Aubert were it situated even in the depths of some squalid town. As it is, no description can give an idea of the weird charm of the situation of this exquisite building. Deep down in the bowels of the rock are the dungeons, and the oubliettes, and the site of the celebrated Iron Cage of St. Michel, all scenes of dark pages of history. Above them, the vast halls of the conventual buildings in massive Gothic style, and the gloomy crypt, where stands the famous Black Virgin. Above these again, the splendid church, partly Norman, partly Gothic, rich in carving, and topped with florid galleries, buttresses and pinnacles; and, last of all, the delicate cloisters, open to the sea breezes, a miracle of graceful double arches, covered with a wealth of carving hardly to be seen anywhere else. And then what a crowd of historic memories cluster round the Mount! Hence the Conqueror was furnished with vessels for his English expedition; here Henry I. was besieged by his brothers; here Henry II. kept court. When Edward III. had conquered all Normandy, St. Michel alone stood out for France, enduring more than one siege. Here the eleventh Louis founded the order of knighthood of St. Michel, and hither, for centuries repaired countless pilgrims, including even royalty, to the shrine of the Black Virgin. Then came the Revolution, and the convent-castle became a prison, and witnessed many horrors. Even as late as the middle of the last century, a victim of the king's tyranny was confined in the Iron Cage.

But the way to enjoy the Mount of Marvels is not to run over it in a day. The old inn of Madame Poulard-*aîné*, close to the first gate (much recommended by a host of testimonials in a visitors' book, which contains, among other distinguished autographs, that of Gustave Doré), has a pleasant set of bedrooms high up on a terrace cut out of the rock. Here one can sit in the morning and take one's *café au lait* at little tables under the trees in tubs, and drink in the scene. Before one rises the wooded coast of Normandy and Brittany, in the vast half circle of the bay, with Avranches perched upon the hill. The dark, lone island of Tombelaine lies couchant in the sea, and, away to the north, like clouds, one can distinguish the islands of Chaussey, and even Jersey and Guernsey. Below, on the wide-spreading, treacherous sands, shrimpers pass with their nets at low tide. A long canal cut in the *Grève* makes a waterway nearly up to Pontorson, at all states of the tide. When the breeze blows up clouds of sand, and a faint mirage glistens far away over on the edge of the bay towards Dol, one is irresistibly reminded of the Suez Canal and the desert. Then, descending, one can wander down the steep, tiny street, through the three gates, past the Cœur de Lion, and the long guns with which our Henry VI. vainly bombarded the fortress, under the apse of the little parish church built out over the roadway. But it is at night, when the moon is at the full, and the waves dash wildly against the walls, while the clouds scud across the sky and the north wind howls through the cloisters and among the buttresses and pinnacles—then is the time to feel the full magic of the Marvellous Mount!

Mont St. Michel.

OLD LOVE-LETTERS.

A Sketch from Life.

BY J. E. PANTON.

Drawing the square, wooden box towards her, Mrs. Mainwaring began to wrench open the lid, remembering as she did so the very words she had used when her husband had nailed it down, laughing at her for the sentimental receptacle she had found for her old love-letters:

"I don't mind how strong the nails are," the lady whispered then, "because as long as I have you, and as long as we love each other, I shall never want to look at them; and as that day can never come, for if you died I should die too, put in as many nails as you like; it won't hurt the box, and it makes me feel secure that no one will ever see them again."

This was ten years ago; and now the last task that remained to be done before she left her husband's house for ever was to look over and destroy these letters, which seemed to her a bitter mockery of all that she had hoped for in her married life. She would not even read them over; she would burn them at once, and then she would go out alone into the cruel world. As the last nail came out reluctantly, and she raised the lid, a faint aroma of wedding cake and orange-blossoms scented the air, and, despite her misery, Mrs. Mainwaring could not help smiling as she recollected the box had held the wonderful structure which, in accordance with an old custom, had been sent down to her to be cut up and handed about during the formal countrified calls—on the subject of which she and Mr. Mainwaring had had their very first dispute, if, indeed, one could call a few hasty words and a somewhat curt command a dispute. Viewed in the light of the future, it was, indeed, nothing half so serious; looked at through the roseate gleam shed by the love-letters it was rather worse. It had been a trial to the high-spirited, town-bred girl to remain in, afternoon after afternoon, all through that sunny July weather, to receive the dullest and stiffest of country and county folk; and she had taken her revenge in jeering at her visitors at dinner, never remembering that her servants took the profoundest interest in all she said and did, retailing it in the kitchens of her callers, and at the bars of the public-houses, considerably embellished and distorted; and dispute number two—a real dispute this time—had risen out of a report that had reached her husband's ears of one of her specially sharp speeches—a speech that had reached other ears too, and had made an immense amount of bitter feeling in the household of one of his oldest and worthiest friends.

Of course, she had reminded him that in London no one interested themselves in the least in such rubbish, and that he could not expect anyone brought up as she had been, among people who neither knew nor wanted to know their next-door neighbour, to recollect she was now among folks whose intellects were so small they could only find amusement in the doings and sayings of their friends and acquaintances; and then equally, of course, and in the tone of voice she particularly disliked, he had calmly demonstrated to her that quite as much "society gossip" went on in her mother's drawing-room as ever did in the drawing-rooms of Dullshire, only in the one place the gossip was rather coarser and less pointed, because it was about people they did not know; and in the other, the gossip was confined to facts and things which as a rule had really been done and said.

Then when the long lovely summer was at an end, and autumn came on, Mrs. Mainwaring began to weary desperately of her home. She was fretted and worried by the almost unsurmountable difficulties of country house-keeping. She pined for the unfailing supply of flowers and fruit and constant novelties to be found only in London; and she almost gave up trying to have her house pretty and well managed, because nothing was to be had except by sending to London, and because the servants could never rise to the occasion, but remained the stolid lumps she had found on her arrival. Then, too, the shooting and hunting engaged

An Old-fashioned Winter. [*Drawn by Sydney Cowell.*

her husband, and though at first, and when he was quite alone, she tried going out with him, her London boots and costume were in the way. She got tired and dirty, abhorred the high roads and the uncertain weather, and pined for the pavements, which were to her as her native heath.

Sitting alone and contemplating the neat bundles of letters, each bound by its own riband, and inscribed with the date of the month and year, Mrs. Mainwaring reviewed her whole married life, and wondered to herself where in truth the secret of its ill-success had lain. She could not put her finger on one real grievance. True, she had been and was desperately dull. She had no occupations, no interests, and as her husband was absorbed in his duty as a magistrate, in his books, in his greenhouses, garden, and model farm, she saw no reason why she should not leave him to them, and for the future reside by herself in a tiny South Audley Street house which had just been left her by her old uncle and godfather, Sir Francis Verrall. Still, she had literally no complaint of him to make.

Taking up one of the packets of letters, previous to dropping it into the centre of the blazing fire before her, Mrs. Mainwaring remembered how tender he had been when she was ill and lay pining among her pillows for some attention better than that afforded her by the local practitioner; how he had told her she should have the best doctor in the world if she wanted him, but that he had been assured by Jones that a day or two in bed would soon cure her of a chill and slight fever, depressing, no doubt, but possessing not the very smallest element of danger about it; and, of course, she had said Jones was a fool, and did not understand her case, and had risen sulkily to find herself quite well and able to drive two miles to a tennis party without the very smallest ill-effect; and, of course, she had met Dr. Jones there, and he had joined with her husband in rallying her about her desire for a better opinion than his, and her husband had laughed and teased her, and had not snubbed the doctor as he ought—for being right and understanding her case. And so it had gone on, little by little, until she had fully made up her mind what to do. Not that there should be any scandal or vulgar talk; she intended nothing of the kind; she would be glad to see her husband whenever he liked to come to town, but she had fully made up her mind not to waste her sweetness on the desert air any more, and meant to take up her residence at once in London. An impatient movement loosened the band which confined the packet of letters she held, and they fell to the ground. As she picked them up, a few words in her own handwriting caught her eye.

It reminded her of a specially pleasant party she had been to at the house of a literary lion, for whose pungent and sparkling talk she had often pined, and despite her intention of burning the letters unread, she could not resist finishing the sentence, ending finally by re-reading the whole long letter, the eight closely-written pages of which caused her to smile and then sigh as she recollected how little she wrote now, and how small her correspondence had become, owing, said she to her friends, to the fact that her present surroundings afforded her small subject for writing.

As she read through the letter slowly, Mrs. Mainwaring could hardly believe that she had ever written it with her own hand and of her own free will. She turned it back and looked at the date and address. Yes, it was her own. Here was the address of the very house to which her steps were wandering now; here the date of about six or eight weeks before her wedding-day; and here was the most astounding description of the party, which, in her memory, existed as the brightest remembrance of a particularly bright and most amusing season. She could hardly credit that she had been profoundly bored by Mr. Sutticliffe's brilliant, shallow talk; that the continual flow of chatter had made her head ache; and that she confessed then she was pining for the country, where, "at least she would have fresh air and room to breathe," and for society that had some real basis, and was not the empty, glittering sham all London society appeared to her to be at the present.

Then the letter went on to describe the tiny, crowded rooms in South Audley Street, and gave such a graphic account of one particularly stuffy night in May, when sleep was rendered impossible by the heat and the noise of the never-ceasing carriages and cabs, that Mrs. Mainwaring remembered, reluctantly enough, how many such nights she had spent, and how she had ever thought thankfully of her wide garden, and open windows; though the dulness of her life and the monotony of her existence had quite clouded over all the happiness she hardly recognised that she [illegible].

She seized the letters and eagerly read them over. Here were those from her husband, breathing thoughts of love, and yet almost warning her that she would regret giving up all that she had in London for him and his dull existence; and here were her own letters, in which she playfully combated his objections, and used herself, over and over again, the very arguments with which he now strove hard to make her content, and which invariably, when so used, made her speechless with rage and vexation. She would never have believed that ten years would have made such a difference in her mode of thought, and as she read the letters she began to see her life under a different aspect, and almost confessed that she was utterly and entirely in the wrong; more especially when she discovered how she had thrown away her opportunities, and instead of being the centre of usefulness she had meant to be in the country village where her lot was cast, was nothing but a disappointed woman, who had allowed herself to be defeated by a dulness which she had found even in the height of the season in town.

Mrs. Mainwaring read on and on, until she was almost buried in the heap of love-letters, and she was at last wearily finishing the last, when her husband came into the room.

"What, crying!" he said. "Jenny, what *is* the matter? No one has been spiteful again, I hope. What!" added he, as she raised her eyes to his face, swimming in tears, "crying over old letters? Surely you are too strong-minded for sentiment? Let me see what's the matter," and he stretched forth his hand as if to possess himself of one of them.

But Mrs. Mainwaring brushed them out of his reach, and allowing him to draw her to him, she burst into a flood of tears. More sensible than most men, Mr. Mainwaring permitted her to have her cry out, and was shrewd enough to see how the land lay. At last she said, "I've been a fool, John. I meant to leave you and live in London, but these letters have cured me. I was quite as discontented there as ever I have been here, and I am sure, if I tried, I should find something to do here."

"I have always said you could, but you scoffed at the very notion," said her husband, pleasantly, taking no notice of the intimation of her purpose of leaving him; and Mrs. Mainwaring felt a pang of disappointment when she found he took such a grave matter so quietly. "Let us begin again, Jenny. We're young still, and have time before us

to amend our lives. It is dull here, no doubt, but there are plenty of interests all round you; and if we can't talk like Sutticliffe, we can help other people, and that's something. But, eh! what's that you're doing," he added, as Mrs. Mainwaring began to tear up one of her own letters. "I can't allow that; you must keep them by you, my dear, in a box that opens without so much trouble as this has cost you; for no doubt you'll forget your good resolutions after we've had a three days' gale from the south-west, perhaps, and you may just as well be able to refer to them."

"But I shall never forget the lesson," sighed Mrs. Mainwaring.

"Perhaps you may not," replied her husband, quietly picking up the letters and stacking them together. "But, as my old nurse used to say, they won't eat anything, and so cost nothing to keep; while it will do neither of us any harm to know that we can always refer to them should we require to do so. There are few better preservers of domestic peace and affection than these despised and long-forgotten love-letters have proved themselves to be." And, so saying, the husband kissed his wife warmly, and they both arranged the letters quietly without another word.

And if Mrs. Mainwaring would have liked to discuss her plan of leaving him, with Mr. Mainwaring, and felt just a little aggrieved that he saw no need for such a talk, she could not help confessing to herself he was right; while when life was dull and monotonous, and not even the village or garden gave her enough to do to prevent her from entertaining some regrets for the old life, a glance at the oaken casket, with its brass ornaments, which her husband gave her to hold the letters—*vice* the old wedding-cake box destroyed—was generally enough to remind her of the old discontent with her London life so freely expressed, and she had not more than once to refer to the letters themselves, and that was to discover an account of a particularly well-managed school, which she wished to copy in her own village for the use of some of the poor folk, who proved, on nearer acquaintance, to be quite as interesting and far more grateful and amusing than many of the London friends for whose society she had pined.

HINTS TO WIVES.

BY A MAN WHO HAS ONE.

It would require more than the average amount of courage found in man for any husband to come forward and publicly lecture wives on their home duties, and way of making the lives of their better halves the happier for having entered into the matrimonial state; and no such task has ever been attempted. Among themselves, however, men have a habit of speaking out in a most daring manner of the errors and weakness of the fair creatures they take for better or worse.

The old story of the nigger who wanted to get rid of his wife because she was all worse and no better is much appreciated by a certain class of married man. There are cynical beings who, because there is a drop of bitter in the cup of sweetness declare there is no honey at all. With such people I have nothing to do, and I do not propose to give their unworthy sentiments a place in these pages. I leave them to the obscurity in which they dwell. It would be an error to introduce them to a discerning public as authorities on married life.

Very few men ever speak ill of their wives individually. I hold that they would be unworthy of woman's love if they did so. No, they *generalise*, and relieve their burdened hearts by such utterances as these:—"It is strange that women *will* do so and so," "You can't reason with a woman," "Women are awfully irritating when they like," and so on. As a matter of fact, they need not be more clear in their utterances—their fellow sufferers perfectly understand them.

Men have their faults, of course. They are not exactly so good as they might be, and a long way from what their better halves expect them to be, but it would ill become me to write upon a theme that could be better dealt with by an experienced married woman. If there be one disposed to take up the subject and treat it in an open fearless manner, there is no living human being who will read it with more interest, and possible enjoyment, than the writer of these lines. I am, however, counsel for the other side. A number of my brethren have furnished me with a brief, and I have to do my best for my clients and myself.

First, as to that great source of domestic discomfort—spring cleaning. I have now had the experience of eight years, and each successive year brings me additional proof that the whole thing is the result of bad management, and furthermore is absolutely needless.

I ask any thinking woman if it would not be possible to make the spring cleaning extend over the entire year? Could it not be done bit by bit, so as to save a distracted married man from a week of misery? Is there any need to have the whole house turned upside down, so that in point of comfort the lumber-room of a furniture shop is absolutely delightful in comparison?

Deeply sensible, as I am, of my ignorance of the intricacies of household work, I take my stand upon this. Spring cleaning is an unnecessary introduction of disorder into a happy home. Even men of seraphic tempers cannot endure it, and if they say little beneath their own roof they make ample amends for their reticence by stormy outbursts abroad—generalising of course in this way—"women, when they persist in spring cleaning, little know how they rouse in a man, etc., etc., etc."

Hint the first. Do not condense your spring cleaning into a few days; spread it over months. A husband will never lose his temper over homœopathic doses of it if he is a reasonable man, but if he has to take it all in one spoonful be sure that, be he a veritable dove in nature, he will kick a little.

A word about old sweethearts. Come, my married lady friends, will not every one of you admit that you have had something to say to the man who proudly possesses you about the man "you might have had?"

And have you not *occasionally* declared, by implication and comparison, that the man you rejected had certain vir-

tues which the man you accepted does not possess? I pause for a reply, knowing that I shall get nothing more than a scornful look and a contemptuous toss of the head. But I am satisfied. *If there is no denial hurled at me*, the world, the married world, will judge between us.

Hint the second. Forget your old sweethearts and let the present lover husband absorb your thoughts. It will be better for both. Old sweethearts are apt to introduce a burning element into the conversation.

It will be readily conceded that very few persons of either sex marry their first love. It would sometimes be a very bad thing if they did, for a first love is often a wild, incoherent, vapoury affair, without form and void, all tender talk and tears, and, like a house built upon sand, when the wind and storms of everyday life arrive, it collapses, without any preliminary creaking and groaning. It vanishes like the dew of the morning.

An old first love, dug up from the depths of the past, has no more vitality than there is in a fossil unearthed from a quarry. But, be he what he may, your husband, gentle lady, has a violent objection to him. Let him rest.

In the sweet, tuneful, semi-delicious days of courtship a man is not averse to going a-shopping. If he be of a very mild disposition he will even enjoy it, but when the knot is tied and the honeymoon a thing of the past, the pleasure of sitting upon an uncomfortable high stool in a draper's shop for hours together is apt to wane. It is no consolation, or at least not much to him that you give a world of trouble for a little outlay. He is on the rack until he once more reaches the outer air.

While on the shopping question, I may dimly suggest—it is hardly worth a hint—that you will do well to make your purchases in a straightforward, business-like manner. At no time be lured to attend a "great selling off" or "disposal of bankrupt stock;" and when you come to a place where "no reasonable offer is refused" pass by on the other side.

Do not, in conversation, worry your husband with domestic details he has not the mind to grasp, nor the soul to appreciate. You are probably possessed of at least one servant-girl who is a trouble to you—good fortune, indeed, is yours if you are not; but when the weary master of the house has finished the labour of the day he does not care to be called upon to express his opinion of "that girl." Bear with your domestics with the fortitude that is the peculiar gift of your sex—suffer silently. Discharge the girl and get another.

I own it is hard for a woman to have to bear the full weight of this affliction. While women are making trousers for tenpence a pair, finding their own needles, thread, and flat-irons, it is almost impossible to get a servant who is not lazy, impertinent, and perhaps vicious. They come into your home buoyantly, and they are ready to go at a moment's notice. They prefer a month's wages to a month's warning, and they are utterly indifferent to the confusion they bring upon a home, or what you may think or say of them. These two states of womankind make a problem I confess I am unable to solve. It appears to be a stern, bitter fact, ladies, that you cannot get good servants, and your husbands cannot help you. The man who enters into a discussion with a refractory cook or housemaid is lost. Therefore, I say, keep their delinquencies as much as you can from him. Lead him not into humiliation.

A cheerful as well as a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband. The smile of a wife is sunshine to a home. It is a thing to bask in, to enjoy, and it has the magic power of dispelling the longings of a man to spend his evenings out. If women generally were more thoughtful in this respect there would be fewer clubs, a scarcity of customers in the misnamed coffee-rooms of the public-houses, and half the billiard-rooms might shut up.

Man is not perfect. But, unless he is a brute or a fool, he is easily led by an honest, thoughtful woman. He will, in all probability, confide in her such troubles and distractions as his business or profession bring upon him, and seek her advice. Ah! I hear you exclaim:

"If he is to bring *his* troubles to us, why cannot we take *ours* to him?"

Dear lady, if your husband has to labour for a living, he will, in these days of competition, need all the strength and support he can get. On him rests the burden of keeping up your home. The impertinence of a servant is not a vital matter, the health of your husband is. No worried man can be very successful in any business or profession, and Want dogs the heels of Failure. You can see there is sound reason in what I say, and I need not pursue the subject further.

Always be neat. Don't wear a lot of "fal-lals" in the evening and come down in the morning looking like a woman rescued from shipwreck. Curl papers clash with daylight; a tattered dress is hideous all the year round. Be as careful in your attire as you were *before* your marriage, and be assured that *he* will appreciate your palpable desire to please.

Again, do not expect your husband to spend all his leisure moments at home in holding the baby. If he is a kind father he will gladly have it at times, and as it grows up be glad to have more of the child, but do not forget that nursing is not natural to man. It is an office requiring a delicacy and care he does not possess. Let there be a medium in this matter.

I am not addressing high-born dames who banish their children from their sides the moment they are born, and allow them to grow up without an inkling of parental love. It would be utterly useless to hint or speak plainly to such women. Society is their child, their husband—everything. It requires a great deal of nursing and gives little love in return. The woman who is content with what society gives her is past talking to.

But it is to you middle-class wives, upper and lower, who are the strength and glory of our country, that I appeal. On the shoulders of your husbands rests the greatness of our empire. It is their devotion to business, their quick-sightedness, their enterprise that has made our country what it is.

Therefore, I do beseech you to reflect upon your power to do evil or good. The man with a happy home, free from strife and worry, goes into business with a *heart*. He can work; he can give all his time and energies to his daily duties, and it is you who can send him out free to do so, or put upon his shoulders a sackful of care, which he cannot shake off. Little worries are like gnats; they bite and sting, and it is difficult to get hold of them or drive them right away.

Of course there are many little things which you will see ought to be done or left undone without any hint from me. Perhaps many of you will say that I need not have troubled myself at all, and that you know as well as I do what you ought to do and not do.

Well! I do not expect any thanks, and shall be greatly surprised if I get any. I am fully sensible that I have exhibited considerable audacity in attempting to teach wives their duty. But I don't think I am exactly teaching. I am simply *reminding*, and hope that I may do so without offence.

I may also be told that it is mean to hide behind a *nom de guerre* and shout at helpless women. I frankly admit that I do not see what anybody would gain by my boldly coming to the front and declaring who I am. The majority may not care to know more of me than they do, but I am sure there are a few, perhaps a very few, who would like to give me a verbal whipping for my impertinence.

The prudence which is part of man in dealing with woman prompts me to keep under cover. I will never confess to living woman, no, not even to the *one* woman who cheers my life, that I have done this thing. With the best possible intentions I have taken up my pen and I lay it down with the hope that my labours will not be entirely unfruitful. Personal praise or recognition in any form I will gladly dispense with.

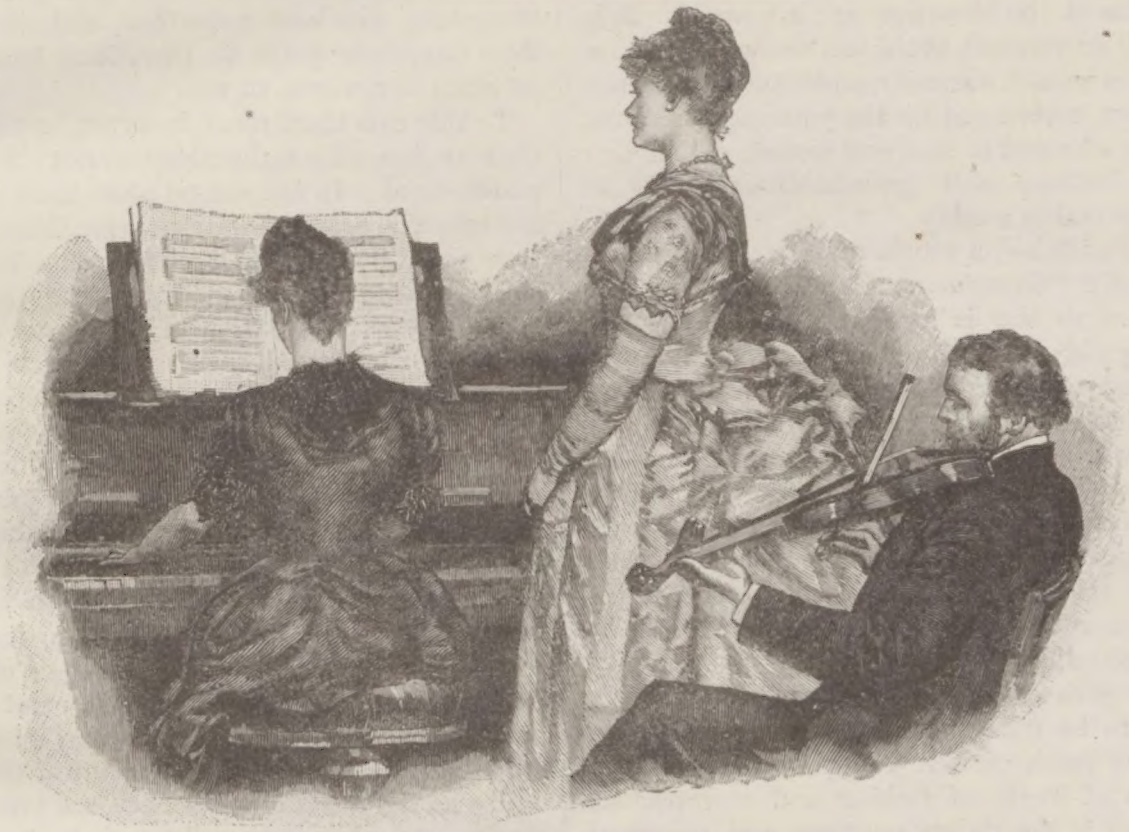
If my reminders should have the good fortune to arouse *one* wife, temporarily slumbering, to a full waking to the knowledge of the power she possesses and how much hinges on her words and acts, I shall be content.

Finally, then, let me in a condensed form link my hints together.

Arrange for *all* domestic work in spring, summer, autumn and winter to be done with as little obtrusiveness and confusion as possible. Let old sweethearts rest, shop wisely and well, be cheerful, neat in attire, sympathetic, and discreet in asking for your husband's assistance with the little ones.

Do not above all be surprised if the husband is not exactly like the lover. The latter forgets everything but his love in his wooing, but he cannot carry that forgetfulness into after life. He must put some heart into his calling, for the world has need of his energies. Increasing years and growing cares *must* sober him, and if he is devoted to his home and kind to the little ones and you, do not think that you have lost anything or that he has ceased to love you because the lover's ways of the wooing and *entire* devotion to you have become things of the past.

MAX MELLOW.



THE SWEETEST SONG.

"WHAT song shall I sing to-night?
A lay of the olden time,
Of courtly dame on her palfrey white,
In an ancient fairy rhyme?
Shall I sing of enchanted bowers,
And of golden-fruited trees,
And of wonderful lotos-lily flowers,
In that land of dreamful ease?

"Or, set in a fuller key,
Shall I blithely sing to you
Of 'The sea! the sea! the open sea!"
With its canopy of blue;
Of the many craft that float
On the heaving ocean's breast,
From the man-of-war to the fisher-boat
Tossed up on the billow's crest?

"Shall I sing of heroes bold,
And make your heart beat high,
Proud to remember the days of old,
With a thankful, tearful eye?

"Or, in saddened minor, say,
Shall I sing those songs once more
Of the long-loved dear ones passed away,
'Not lost, but gone before'?

"Or, in loftier, nobler strain,
Shall I tune my voice to tell
Of the better land where we meet again,
For evermore to dwell?"
Nay, none of these songs to-night,
I would like them another time;
But, darling, you know that my heart's delight
Is some sweet and tender rhyme.

Sing of the Reaper's Flower,
Sing soft in the twilight dim,
Sing "The Children's Home," or "The Children's Hour,"
Or the lullaby cradle hymn.
Sweetly the verses flow
That tell of a mother's love,
Most sacred inheritance earth can show,
Most like to our God above.

LUCY TAYLOR.

KITH AND KIN IN THE OUTER CIRCLE.

BY SARAH TYTLER.

THE GRANDMOTHER.

MANY a pretty picture has been painted of a venerable grandmother in snowy cap and soft shawl, supporting her tottering feet by the help of a staff—ebony and gold headed, if she is a rich woman, bamboo, oak, or ash as her wealth diminishes. But what of the reality? It has been said that this is a generation in which neither men nor women grow old gracefully, and that this is especially true of women. The hoary head which ought to be a crown of glory is rarely to be seen, or if seen is surmounted by singularly inappropriate head-gear. The hurry and rush of life is dragging along the old, as it is sweeping on the young, and in the exigencies of the situation age is ignored. It is not admitted, or it is only owned, at the last moment, by those whose chances in the race of necessity, ambition, or pleasure it impairs; it is not reverenced by the younger aspirants, eager for the strife, who find in men and women old enough to be their grandfathers and grandmothers rivals in business, in pleasure and in society.

Some years ago *Punch* had a couple of illustrations in its pages, which presented "Grandmamma as she ought to be," and "Grandmamma as she is." "Grandmamma as she is" was a flaunting old dame, bound for some fashionable gathering, feathered and furbelowed, painted and powdered, with a ridiculously small composition in lace and flowers doing duty as a bonnet, on the top of crimped, curled, piled-up false hair, an airy nothing in the way of a mantle on her attenuated shoulders, a fantastic sunshade in her tightly-gloved, trembling hand. I shall only pause to say that simplicity in attire, which is becoming in all, is demanded in the old. The attire may be rich and costly, according to means and rank, or it may be the threadbare garb of honest poverty, but it must be simple, if it is to be fitting. There is one attainment which is within the reach of rich and poor alike, and is worth any amount of freaks of fashion and meretricious adornment, and that is the dainty neatness and cleanness which leaves a queen the lady it finds her, and shows that a peasant woman is a gentlewoman in soul.

But I shall not take our grandmother and represent her as she is merrily satirised in *Punch*, only remember if there is any truth in these clever reflections of social life, the folly laughed at descends, modified, no doubt, but still existing in some form, through all ranks, all classes. I shall borrow for my purpose the typical grandmother of every generation—the worthy old soul who has borne the burden and heat of the pay in her time. She has travailled in spirit and in body for the sons and daughters who are now in their turn doing men and women's work in the world. She ought, if possible, to enjoy in the decline of life the rest and security she earned in her years of strength and activity.

It is not necessary that the grandmother should be the mother of children and grandchildren. God may have given her neither—no, nor a husband. She may only be an honorary "granny," claimed indiscriminately as such in name, or by implication, where all the young people around her are concerned. She is the grandmotherly old woman who answers to the essential definition of the character.

There is a pleasant peasant custom in France, according to which young working women and men will hail any friendly old woman as "*Gran'mère.*" Examples of it are to be found in Béranger's people's songs, and I once met a curious illustration of it in a crowded tram-car into which an old "sister" in the dress of her religious order entered, and was immediately invited to take a seat by some mechanics who made way for her, greeting her heartily as "*Gran'mère.*"

A grandmother, as a rule, knows that her life is far through before she acquires even the shadow of the title; she is a wise woman, if in addition to realising the fact, she acts up to it, if she stands back—becomes more and more of a looker-on, and less and less of a performer in the drama that is being carried on around her. She may well leave to the young, who have come fresh and vigorous on the scene, their day, their parts to play, their laurels, with yet more substantial rewards, to win.

To this rule there must, however, be many exceptions. In the first place all grandmothers are not old, they may be merely middle-aged. In the second place there are poor old grandmothers who cannot afford to shelve themselves or be shelved. They are still obliged to work for themselves or others, almost as busily, if not quite so enthusiastically, as in their youth and prime. It is good for them if they can do it courageously and contentedly, with some modest pride in their continued independence and usefulness. God keep them at their tasks.

There is yet a third reason against our grandmother and her contemporaries being wholly set aside, put on a pedestal or stranded in the last stage of their journey. I read in a thoughtful, kindly book lately a warning which I felt inclined to endorse. It was against the old, or those who fancy themselves old, retiring while still in possession of their faculties and of fair health, too soon, from what may have been a busy career to the stagnation of complete, interminable leisure, in the doubtful enjoyment of which they expect, and are expected by others, to wear away and rust out, in *ennui* and depression, the remnant of their days. But by doing so the fruits of experience are practically lost to the world; and while it is well to speak of making way for the young, and granting them their day, some consideration is due to the old, who ought not to be constrained to feel themselves superannuated and superseded. It is certainly a mistake to imagine that men and women condemned, apart from devotional exercises, to dawdling idleness, constitutional walks, reading the newspapers, etc., etc., are thus better situated for promoting the growth of the soul and preparing for another world than their neighbours who are still immersed, though not engulfed, in the lawful business of life. It would not be so, even if the condemned men and women were able to spend their whole time in acts of religion and charity. These would probably degenerate into "will worship," and the slavish sacrifice of terror. Labour is God's ordinance, in the performance of which we are doing our duty with more or less unselfishness, and receiving His favour and blessing. He has not decreed the age at which we shall rest and look on at the busy scene. Our own sensations and capabilities, and the circumstances of our lot—His will, in short, must decide for us. Some men and women are called upon to retire from active service at sixty, some at seventy, some not even on the verge of eighty. The example of our great statesmen, many of whom have

been far advanced in life when they directed the helm of public affairs, ought at least to show us what the old can bear and do when they are on their mettle.

After all these reservations are granted, the truth remains that the grandmother (the grandfather, too, for that matter) is wisest and happiest who can relax the strain of exertion, can sit down tranquilly and think over the past and the future. She should submit to see new ways and customs putting out the old, new ideas unfolding and expanding, a new region, a new world, and to realise and own that there is good in the new as well as in the old. Nay, she ought to be conscious, and to feel neither aggrieved nor displeased by the consciousness, that she is being gently pushed off the human stage in order to let other players have their turn, and that she may get the promotion to a higher state and the restitution of all she loved best, and has long lost, which have been promised to her.

It seems, at a first glance, that the life of a grandmother is better cared for, is brighter and gladder to the end, in foreign countries than in our own. Abroad she seldom lives alone; the house of one of her children is her home, where she is surrounded by her descendants in more than one generation, an object of care and tenderness to all. It is the redeeming feature of many a *ménage* whose lack of privacy and superficiality, rather than frivolity, we are apt to despise, that there the grandmother is so deferred to, looked up to, made much of, that the old woman in the chimney-corner is still a power in the family, still made happy, by all the homage and sympathy it is possible for her to receive. Oh! the moral degradation in the lower strata of our population when the smallest dole or pittance is too often grudged to the old father and mother—once a hard-working pair—and they are transferred to the cold charity of the workhouse with little more than a stolid sense of relief on the part of their children and grandchildren.

But there is also something to be said in defence of our English customs. There is the independence which craves a hearth, however humble, of its own. There is the delicacy which recoils from intruding even on the nearest and dearest, and says of a young couple beginning life together, or of the same couple surrounded by a youthful family, "Let them have their home to themselves. Let them be free to shape their lives, and those of their children, and to manage their household, without our superintendence and interference. Let them seek us when they wish for our company and counsel—they will value them all the more—we shall prize our children's society still more highly because neither they nor we can have the boon always." Such sentiments belong to the national character, and are pervaded by the mingled good and evil which attend on all human opinions.

"The strength of age is to sit still," says the proverb, and though it need not be obeyed too literally, the hurrying to and fro, the passion for change, the craving for novelty and excitement, are much to be deprecated in a grandmother. All honour to her if, under the stress of circumstances, for the good of those she loves, she leaves her comfortable home, breaks up the long-established habits dear to her, braves change and fatigue, and travels many a long mile, just to solace an ailing man, comfort a sore-hearted woman, or benefit a little child. But otherwise her place is home, wherever it may be. Her greatest earthly endowment is contentment with her surroundings. A love of amusement, society, adventure for which she has ceased to be qualified are—well, not admirable in a grandmother. If she is the patient, peaceful, still diligent figure we love to think her, she will be as quick as ever to enter into other people's joys and sorrows, for her heart need not be old though her face is wrinkled and her frame bent, and she is, when all is said, more disengaged than at the tumultuous epochs of her life. She will be ready to feel with a child in its passing pain. She will be full of loving devices to help and gratify her juniors by many a year. She need not fear that she will be either overlooked or forgotten. How interesting and fascinating she is in her wealth of wisdom, her quaint, picturesque old stories, her never-failing experience. If only she is sagacious enough to know when to stop, if she fails to resent not being listened to when some breathless interest of the day is clamouring for discussion, if she bears her growing infirmities sensibly and sweetly, and does not propose to lay them on other backs already sufficiently burdened, if she fights conscientiously against the tendency to egotism and to pessimism, to narrowing views and darkening conclusions—to the timidity with which the old are liable to be beset, then she will be a joy and blessing to the last.

A NEW YEAR CHIME.

ONE amid the wintry air
Hearkens to a happy peal,
O'er the snowy meadows fair
New Year bells so sweetly steal;
Breathe they of the Father-Hand
That for aye will be her Guide,
Leading to the Summer-Land,
Where the streams of glory glide.

Nothing knows the wistful heart
Of the hidden, veilèd store
That the New Year shall impart—
And the paths that lie before;
Tremblings stir within her soul
Half of gladness, half of fear,
While succeeding seasons roll
What of change is drawing near?

Oh, to read with prophet-eyes
Secrets of the days to be!
Oh, to guess the fate that lies
Through the year that none can see!
There beyond the curtained gate
Do the shades of sorrow steal?
Or do rosy blossoms wait,
Sweet as dreamings can reveal?

What though mortal sight be dim,
Still the chimings seem to say—
"God is Love; oh, rest in Him!
Hope thou in the Lord alway;
He is Shepherd, Refuge, Aid,
Changeless through the changing hours;
Trust Him, love Him in the shade,
Praise Him for the New Year flowers!"

MARGARET HAYCRAFT.

DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

Fig. 1.

At this season of the year many of our readers will be questioning as to what material to get for a new winter dress which will do duty at our Christmas and New Year social gatherings, and then be put aside for the brighter days we hope to get a little later on. It may therefore be helpful to call attention to some of the fabrics which have come under our notice; for, while all sensible women will refrain from becoming the slaves of fashion, there is no reason why our gowns should not be as pretty and effective as our means will allow; and those of us who do not get a new dress often will be the more anxious to make the most of our opportunity. The buyers in some of the large wholesale houses tell us that every day fresh patterns are being put before them; one firm of manufacturers will show nothing but stripes, another large figures, while a third has pretty materials, with small object patterns in many different shades of colour. No one would have thought last January that our Scotch friends would have had such a demand for neutral-tinted tweeds. This material has gained such favour that the supply has not been equal to the demand, and many of the manufacturers had sold out long before their season closed.

We English folks are sometimes twitted by our Continental cousins on account of our bad taste, and we must confess that some of their remarks are well deserved by us. For instance, we sometimes see a short, stout lady wearing a dress of large checked pattern, or with stripes going round instead of downward, when that style happens to be fashionable. Let us consider what will suit us before purchasing rather than what is most fashionable. Indeed, we should advise those who cannot afford to have many changes in their wardrobe, not to choose patterns that are too pronounced, as these get out of date more quickly than a plain material.

We give here a style (Fig. 1) which will be a great favourite this season. The material used for our model was foule serge, which can be purchased from sixteenpence to two shillings and sixpence per yard, eight yards being sufficient for a lady of ordinary height. The braiding was done by the Canelly machine, which is in great request just now, when braided dresses are so much worn. It is not necessary, however, to have the braiding done by machine; the long winter evenings will give some of our readers an opportunity for doing such a piece of work, while others will buy a set of braiding and sew it on the dress. Black braid will work well on any shade of cloth, and will come cheaper than coloured, as both braid and silk to sew it on with are more expensive in colours. Some people have a great liking for contrast colours in braiding, but we would advise a self colour or a black braid. One very important consideration in having a braided dress is to see that the material is firm enough to hold the braid and the stitches, or the time and work will be thrown away. This is especially the case with cheap costumes bought ready-braided. Nearly all the cost is expended over the braiding, and the material is so poor that it soon gives way where the braid is sewn on. Those of our readers who can braid for themselves can purchase plain material and braid from 16s. 9d. upwards.

The style of costume shown in Fig. 2 is suitable for either a young or middle-aged lady, and it will make a very useful and inexpensive dress. Nine yards of material were used for our model—four yards of check and five yards of plain. If desirable, the pattern can be varied, so as to use less of the check in the skirt, and thus leave sufficient to make the body entirely of the fancy material, and the sleeves of the plain. Another style, equally effective, could be made by having the back V-shaped as the front appears in our sketch. The skirt could also be altered by having a panel each side of the check, and the front and back of the plain material. In this case, only three yards of the check will be needed and six of the plain.

The material used for the model was serge, which can be bought in a robe, the check and plain matched in colour, from 12s. 11d. up to 42s.; or, if lengths are required not in robes, a good, useful serge should be obtained for 1s. 4½d. per yard.

Flat patterns can be supplied, Fig. 1, 6½d., or body and skirt, 1s. ½d. Fig. 2, 1s. ½d. Address, "M.C." Pattern, 9, Paternoster Row.

Fig. 2.